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AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

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The Monterey Trip

The Audubon Association successfully extended its field range southward on Sunday, May 18, 1947, when 37 members met in Pacific Grove for an unusually fine day of birding under the leadership of Mr. Laidlaw Williams. Clear, sunny skies prevailed, although localized fogs blew in during the afternoon. Emphasis was upon shore observation between Pacific Grove and Point Lobos, and exceptional views of sea birds in their breeding plumages were obtained. Shorter visits were also made to specialized grassland and pine habitats where, respectively, Grasshopper Sparrows and Pygmy Nuthatches dwell.

Beginning at the Hopkins Marine Museum, the group scanned the wave-battered rock formations jutting offshore, each for its specially desired species. Thus, behind the Museum, California Murres and a lone Wandering Tatler were particularly watched among Heermann and Western Gulls, Brown Pelicans and Cormorants, common to all the sites, and at Bird Rock, where thousands of Brandt Cormorants rested, the curious courtship and nesting of that species were observed. Many cormorants were either sitting on nests or carrying in seaweed with which to construct them. Occasionally these restive birds would tip their heads back and show the nuptial beauty of their cerulean gular pouches. By way of contrast the group later saw the reddish gular pouches of Baird Cormorants at Sea Lion Point, and learned that the Bairds prefer to nest on steep cliffs; and indeed, in one of the nests on these narrow ledges there were green eggs visible. Black Oyster-catchers were found along rocky Point Lobos, and there, too, a part of the sea was dotted with daintily pirouetting Northern Phalaropes. Cypress Point, on the 17 Mile Drive, furnished the impressive sight of thousands of Sooty Shearwaters in their stiff-winged wave-skimming flight.

Lunchtime on the Carmel River was remarkable for three Pacific Loons and an American Merganser which swam undisturbed in full view and then flew even nearer showing the fine striations on the loons' heads. And much farther in the distance a white-tailed Kite spent at least 35 minutes preening in the top of a tree, unaware of being sought by many straining pairs of eyes.

Great rarities of the day were Mrs. Austin's Red Phalarope, barely a dot

among the kelps off the Pacific Grove waterfront, and Dr. Reynold's Purple Martin, prominent in a Lobos flock of Cliff Swallows.

Seven members of the Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society assisted in swelling the list to the following 70 species:

Pacific Loon
Western Grebe
Sooty Shearwater
Brown Pelican
Brandt Cormorant
Baird Cormorant
Mallard
White-winged Scoter
Ruddy Duck
American Merganser
Turkey Vulture
White-tailed Kite
Sparrow Hawk
Coot
Black Oyster-catcher
Kildeer
Hudsonian Tatler
Red Phalarope
Northern Phalarope
Glaucous-winged Gull
Western Gull
California Gull
Bonaparte Gull
Heermann Gull
California Murre
Pigeon Guillemot
Band-tailed Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Red-shafted Flicker
Belted Kingfisher
Allen Hummingbird
California Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Western Flycatcher
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Violet-green Swallow
Tree Swallow
Rough-winged Swallow
Barn Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Purple Martin
Steller Jay
Crow
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Bush-tit
Pygmy Nuthatch
Creeper
Wren-tit
Robin
Hermit Thrush
Russet-backed Thrush
Western Bluebird
Hutton Vireo
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-throat
Pileolated Warbler
Western Meadowlark
Common Red-wing
Black-headed Grosbeak
Brewer Blackbird
California Purple Finch
Linnet
Common Goldfinch
Green-backed Goldfinch
Spotted Towhee
Savannah Sparrow
Oregon Junco
White-crowned Sparrow
Song Sparrow

— Gerald E. Sedgewick, *Historian*

The Zonation of Sea Birds Off Central California

If you go on a boat out the Golden Gate, past the lightship and the Farallones to a point some fifty miles off San Francisco, you may notice changes in both the kinds of birds present and the relative numbers of the different kinds. Just outside the Gate you will find loose flocks of Western and California Gulls feeding where the tides churn up water as they pass into and out of the bay. Perhaps also you might spot a passing Baird Cormorant or Brown Pelican, or in summer a Heermann Gull or Caspian Tern. Farther out Murres begin to appear and these with gulls and cormorants are the most numerous species seen for several miles where the water is light greenish in color. Near the lightship the first Black-footed Albatross or Sooty Shearwater may often be found, although these birds usually do not become common until six miles or so farther out where the water gradually becomes darker and bluer. A short distance south and west of the Farallones the water is a dark blackish blue and often large concentrations of cormorants, murres, gulls, and shearwaters are to be found together with smaller numbers of Cassin Auklets, Tufted Puffins, Black-footed Albatrosses, Fulmars, and Pink-footed Shearwaters. From here on out, gulls, cormorants, and murres become less numerous, and shearwaters and albatrosses, and during migration, Sabine Gulls, Kittiwakes, Fork-tailed Petrels and other truly oceanic forms make up the bulk of the birds seen.

Thus you can see a change in the bird life suggesting somewhat the zonation

which you see as you go from the Sacramento Valley up to the crest of the Sierra. To be sure, the off-shore zonation is less distinct, and there are no tree species to mark the physical aspect of the zones; but the zonation of birds is still evident. In both cases there are species which are rather limited in their range and others which are more widespread, and in each case you can estimate your relative position in the series of zones by noting the bird species which are present.

With what prominent environmental feature is this zonation related? If instead of going out from San Francisco, you travel west from Monterey, the birds of the off-shore zone are encountered much nearer the coast. If you then examine hydrographic charts, you will find that the thirty fathom line lies about fourteen miles off San Francisco and only four miles off Point Pinos near Monterey. Furthermore, the one hundred fathom line lies twenty-seven miles off San Francisco and only about seven miles off Point Pinos. Thus the zonation can be said to be correleated with the depth of the water.

However, the means by which the ocean depth affects the distribution of sea birds is largely a matter of conjecture. Of course, birds such as scoters which are habitually bottom feeders will remain in relatively shallow water; and birds such as cormorants which roost on land are limited in their distribution by the distance flown daily to and from the roosting place. But the factors limiting the distribution of the truly oceanic forms such as the albatrosses and shearwaters are not clear. It is known that there is a definite zonation of life in the ocean, and it is likely that this, acting through specialized food habits, is one of the important limiting factors. At any rate, much more information must be amassed before the final answer to the problem can be determined.

— Robert W. Storer

May Field Trip

May 11 was a beautiful spring day and 19 members and 3 guests met at Saint Mary's, near Moraga for a most enjoyable day of birding. The highlights of the day were the Western Tanager, Lazuli Bunting, and Western Bluebird. The birds were in full song and some were observed carrying food to young. Nesting places were spotted in this way.

The forty-two species observed were:

Turkey Vulture
Red-tailed Hawk
Sparrow Hawk
California Quail
Mourning Dove
Allen Hummingbird
Hairy Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Western Kingbird
Ash-throated Flycatcher
Black Phoebe
Western Flycatcher
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Violet-green Swallow
Steller Jay
California Jay
Plain Titmouse
Bush-tit
Slender-billed Nuthatch
Wren-tit
House Wren
Bewick Wren
Robin
Russet-backed Thrush
Western Bluebird
Warbling Vireo
Lutescent Warbler
Pileolated Warbler
Western Meadowlark
Red-wing Blackbird
Western Tanager
Black-headed Grosback
Lazuli Bunting
California Purple Finch
House Finch
Green-backed Goldfinch
Lawrence Goldfinch
Spotted Towhee
Brown Towhee
Oregon Junco
Chipping Sparrow
Song Sparrow

—Mrs. B. W. Stone, *Historian*

June Field Trip

The June trip will be taken on June 15 to Dimond Park and Canyon in Oakland. San Francisco members take "N" bus in front of terminal at 8:10 a. m., get off at Fruitvale Avenue, where East Bay members will meet them at 8:45 a. m. Our president, Dr. T. E. Reynolds, and Mrs. Reynolds invite the group to bring their lunches to their home at 140 Estates Drive, Piedmont, where hot beverages and dessert will be served. Those planning to be present please sign up at June meeting or drop a card to Mrs. T. E. Reynolds.

Miss F. Plymell will lead the trip.

June Meeting

The 375th meeting of the Audubon Association of the Pacific will be held on Thursday, June 12, at 8:00 p. m., in the Assembly Room of the San Francisco Public Library at Larkin and McAllister Streets.

Our speaker for the evening is to be Mrs. T. E. Reynolds, who is to show us her film "With Feathers Flying."

News

Miss Grace I. Crowe, our editor, is vacationing in the East this month. She will be visiting Pennsylvania, New York and Washington, D. C. Part of her time will be spent studying the migration of warblers.

IN MEMORIAM

We are sorry to announce the recent death of one of our members, Mr. S. M. Haslett, of Alameda.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

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Monthly meetings second Thursday, 8:00 p. m.

Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Sts., San Francisco

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Student memberships, $1.50 per year

Life memberships, $50.00

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